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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/SCE (WESTLEY) AND WHA/CCA (MCFARLAND)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/01/2018

TAGS: ETRD ETTC PREL HR CROATIA CU

SUBJECT: CUBA: CROATIA'S COUNTRY REVIEW FOR SUSPENSION OF
TITLE III OF THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: STATE 126578

Classified By: Rick Holtzapple, PolEcon Counselor, for reasons 1.4 (b)
& (d).

(C) Croatia has only limited relations with Cuba. It has diplomatic relations, but no Embassy in Havana. It covers Cuba from the Croatian Embassy in Madrid. There have been no high-level visits to Cuba by Croatian officials in 2008. According to Neven Pelicaric, who will be arriving in Madrid as Croatia's new Ambassador to both Spain and Cuba in January 2009, President Mesic had considered scheduling a visit to Havana for December 2008, but the visit had been postponed indefinitely when advisors and diplomats indicated that such a visit would be more trouble than it was worth. Pelicaric, who had asked the Embassy for a briefing on US policy toward Cuba unrelated to reftel tasking, told us Croatia is generally supportive of EU policy toward Cuba, but has never been engaged in any of the specifics. There are no significant Croatian investments in Cuba, with the main trade deal having been a contract for a Croatian telecoms firm in the mid-1990s to replace all of Cuba's main switchboards. More recently, there had been exploratory talks of business deals in pharmaceuticals, but no specific projects are in the works at this time. Croatia has no exchange programs or specific bilateral agreements with Cuba that Pelicaric was aware of. The only noticeable economic activity between the two countries was a recent rise in the number of Croatian tourists.

BRADTKE